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## FIGURES OF SPEECH IN *MELENGKAN* OF GAYO WEDDING

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### Abstract

*Melengkan* is a custom in the plateau of *Gayo* performed at a wedding expressed in poetical, lyrical or proverbial form. The study is aimed at identifying the types and uses of figures of speech in *Melengkan* of *Gayo* wedding supported by the concept of figures of speech proposed by Kosasih (2007). The data were collected through observation and a video-recording of the traditional *Gayo* wedding, as well as interviews with *melengkan* performers under descriptive qualitative method (Best, 1982). The figures of speech used in *Melengkan* also reflect the cultural value of *Gayo* community with points of local wisdom. The findings showed that there were four classifications of figures of speech: Comparison, Substitution, Addition or Amplification, and Omission or suppression used in *Melengkan*. The cultural values of *Melengkan* are for remembrance of local wisdom, warnings from customary philosophy, religion, and also for giving advice and recalling the history and beauty of *Melengkan* speech. The context of using *Melengkan* is to perpetuate and reflect cultural values, namely, politeness, respect, speaking softly, friendliness and resoluteness. These findings imply the importance of conserving *Melengkan* as a part of the *Gayo* culture in every part of life.

**Keywords:** figures of speech, *Melengkan*, *gayo*, wedding

### Introduction

Figures of speech or figurative language are two words or groups of words used to give particular emphasis to an idea or sentiment. A figure of speech expresses an idea or experience vividly, forcefully, and briefly. Sometimes figure of speech may seem even more direct than literal language because it helps the listener grasp important ideas immediately.

In other words, the figures of speech are forms of expression in which words are used differently from their normal meanings. According to Croll (1986:65) figures of speech are forms of expression that departs from normal word or sentence order or from common literal meanings for words, for the purpose of achieving a special effect.

The language used in a wedding such as *Gayo* wedding always appears in the forms of figurative language to express an essential aesthetic purpose, widening and deepening the range of perception and response to the world of objects or ideas. Figure of speech

has function to make the listener more impressed to the sentences or the utterances. (Fasold, 2001)

Gayo language is one of the ethnic languages in *Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam*. Gayo ethnic lives in three regions namely central Aceh (*Takengon*), *Bener meriah*, *Gayo lues* (*Belang kejeran*), and some of them live in other regions such as south-east Aceh (*Kutacane*), several villages in *Aceh Tamiang*, *Nagan Raya*, *South Aceh* (*Tapak tuan*), and East Aceh (*Langsa*). Most of the *Gayo* ethnics are Moslems.

In *Gayo* ideology, the use of language is known as a term (*becerak mutempat urum becerak lemut* which means *speaking based on the place and speaking softly*). It means when *Gayo* people speak, their language should be based on the place, context and should be polite.

In *Gayo* wedding, there is a speech tradition termed *melengkan*. *Melengkan* is a kind of cultural address. *Melengkan* consists of three parts: opening, body of speech, and closing. The function of *melengkan* is to make communication and diplomacy easier when wedding is taking place. If there is miscommunication, the bride side will make the process of ceremony more difficult and this will give bad effect on the ceremony. This is in line with what Trudgill (2000) states that language is closely associated with social structure and cultural value system. He also states that language as a social phenomenon is closely tied up with the social structure and value system of society. It means that language cannot be separated from the social structure and culture value system. Language is the reflection of the existing culture. (Buniyamin, 1994)

## **Literature Review**

### **Figures of Speech**

A figure of speech is where a word or words are used to create an effect, often where they do not have their original or literal meaning. If someone says that they are 'starving', they do not mean that they are in fact dying of hunger, but that they are very hungry. This is a simple example of a figures of speech, where the word is used to heighten or increase the state that they are describing. A metaphor or simile is two of the most common forms used. (Smith, 2000)

Figurative language is often associated with literature and poetry in particular. But the fact is, whether we are conscious of it or not, we use figures of speech everyday in our own writing or conversation. For example common expression such as "falling in love", "racking our brain", "hitting a sales target", and "climbing the ladder of success" are all metaphors-the most pervasive figure of all. Likewise, we rely on similes when making explicit comparisons ("light as a feather"). Using original figures of speech in our writing is a way to convey meaning in fresh, unexpected ways. Figures can help readers understand and stay interested in what we have to say.

In broad outline, Kosasi (2007: 121) divides figures of speech in to four kinds: 1). Comparison; 2). Substitution; 3). Addition or Amplification; 4). Omission or Suppression. Comparison consists of simile, metaphor, allegory, and personification; Substitution of

metonymy, synecdoche, merism, euphemism, and irony; Addition or Amplification of parallelism, repetition, hyperbole, climax, and anticlimax; and Omission or Suppression of ellipsis, erotesis, and meiosis.

## **Research Method**

A method is a way of doing something. This study was conducted by applying qualitative research design. The qualitative research has the natural setting as direct source of data and the researcher is the instrument. According to Maxwell (2010: 106) descriptive method is non-experimental, since it deals with the relationship between no manipulated variables in nature.

Qualitative studies are those in which the description of observation is not ordinarily expressed in quantitative terms. It is not suggested to use numerical measures, but that other means of description are emphasized. A descriptive qualitative method is one of which used to describe situation, events or occurrences so that this method is appropriately used in this research. The main data are taken through observation, interview, and tape or video recording supported by respective books and other references. (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994)

## **Discussion**

### **Comparison**

In these figures of speech, the author transfers a word into a foreign semantic field to illustrate or picture his thought and to evoke the appropriate feeling in his reader. In this way the writer draws a comparison between two things of unlike nature that yet have something in common. The subject matter is real, but that, to which it is compared is present in the imagination. That which the subject and things compared have in common is not stated and must be guessed at and validated by the interpreter from other indications in the composition. The interpreter must also try to articulate the mood evoked by the figure.

#### **a. Simile**

Simile is a resemblance, an explicit comparison (using “like” or “as”) between two things of unlike nature that yet have something in common. Example: Silence settled on the audience like a block of granite in the wedding. “Silence” settling down is here compared to a “block of granite”. The image is one of suddenness and absoluteness. There is a contrast implied between the roar of an audience before a performance, and the sudden silence when the safety curtain goes up.

*(Etek serap u lagu manuk Leli, gere pujiken jema pujiken diri).*

Meaning: the girl is like leli bird, no body praises her but she praises herself.

#### **b. Metaphor**

A metaphor is an analogy between two objects or ideas, conveyed by the use of a word instead of another. This description will serve the purpose of this introduction, but it must be acknowledged to be a simplification. Pure metaphors are essentially figures of transference.

*(We jimet ama ine e)*

Meaning: *she is a charm of her parents.*

**c. Allegory**

Allegory is a figure of speech in which abstract ideas and principles are described in terms of characters, figures, and events

*(Iwas munyeleseken masalah, ike nguk nipe mate ranting enti mupolok, kerpe enti mulayu).*

Meaning: *in solving the problem, if it is possible, don't break the branch, don't wilt the leaf.*

**d. Personification**

Personification is the investment of non-human subjects (e.g. abstractions, inanimate objects, or animals) with human qualities or abilities.

*(Sen dele a nguk munganulen sudere-sudere)*

Meaning: *with his money, he can invite his family.* Here, money is compared with the person as if the money can invite someone.

**Substitution**

**a. Metonymy**

Metonymy is a figure of speech used in rhetoric in which a thing or concept is not called by its own name, but by the name of something intimately associated with that thing or concept.

*(jema si pane melengkan turah jema si pane beretorika nyak Soekarno)*

Meaning: *people who can melengkan should be the people who can speak in Sukarno.*

**b. Synecdoche**

Synecdoche is an exchange of one idea for another connected idea. In this figure one word receives something from another which is unexpressed but associated with it because it belongs to the same genus.

*(Saman gayo nge I tene sawah ku Amerika)*

Meaning: ***Saman gayo has been well known up to America.*** *Saman Gayo* belongs to Gayo people. In this example, the sentence is called a synecdoche because *Saman* is representing Gayo culture.

**c. Merism**

Merism is a figure of speech by which a single thing is referred to a conventional phrase that enumerates several of its parts, or which lists several synonyms for the same thing.

*(Sodere ku si ari uken urum toa, ari bur urum paluh nge geh meh ne ihin)*

Meaning: *our family from up-stream and down-stream has come here.* In this example, it is clear that the sentence is categorized as merism because *Uken* is the opposite of *Toa*. And *Bur* is the opposite of *Paluh*.

**d. Euphemism**

Euphemism is a substitution with an agreeable or less offensive expression in place of one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant to the receiver, or to make it less troublesome for the speaker, as in the case of double speak (Allan: 1991) The substitution of an inoffensive or mild expression for an offensive one.

*(inen uwen u nge I tangon si rawan ku umah ni jema tue e)*

meaning: *the wife has been dropped by her husband to her parents*

Drop in here is the same with divorce. In other word the wife has been divorced by her husband. In this sentence the word drop is preferably used to divorce. The reason is to make the sentence softer and not to make the sentence offensive to the listener.

#### e. Irony

Irony is the expression of thought in a form that conveys its opposite. The meaning is reversed by juxtaposing it into a semantic field of thought inappropriate to the speaker and/or subject.

(*Ling jeroh mua tek lagu pepar pungi*)

Meaning : *your beautiful sound is like thunder*. In this sentence, at the beginning the speaker praises the girl and after that abuses her. Actually, the voice of the girl is bad but to tease her, the speaker says her voice beautiful.

### Addition or Amplification

#### a. Parallelism

Parallelism is one part of speech governing two or more other parts of a sentence (often in parallel series). This figure of speech is typically used in poetry.

*Muripni nyanya* = *life is difficult*

*Muripni hejeb* = *life is hard*

*Muripni legeh* = *life is complex*

*Muripni neraka* = *life is hell*

*Ku jema sig ere taat* = *for people who not obedient*

#### b. Repetition

Repetition is repeating the same word or words in the passage (Kosasih: 124;) this phenomenon has many variations, and the expositor must state the type and purpose of repetition.

(*Reje . . . ampun reje . . . reje . . . maaf reje . . . !*)

Meaning : *Pardon me, king . . . ! Forgive me, king . . . !*

#### c. Hyperbole

Hyperbole is a figure exaggerated in order to create emphasis or effect. Hyperbole is a literary device often used in poetry, and is frequently encountered in casual speech.

(*sempur alake munerah belenye ni buah hati e*)

Meaning : *his sweat spurt when he looks for his children's expense*. The sentence is written in exaggerated way. It is impossible that the sweat can be spurt.

#### d. Climax

Climax is an arrangement of words in order of increasing the importance or attention, usually from the smallest sense to the highest one.

(*Si ku hormati sodere . . . tuan tue . . . tuan imem . . . arikite kemana rata bewenne*

Meaning : *honorable brother . . . the elders . . . the leader of communal prayer*.

This utterance is called climax because the utterance is starting from the lowest status in society to highest one. In this sentence the lowest status is *sodere* and the highest status is *imem*.

**e. Anticlimax**

Anticlimax is a figure of speech in which arrangement of words is from the highest to the lowest.

*I was jema sinte muluah turah ara gecik, imem, katib, urum bilal.*

Meaning: *wedding ceremony must be attended by village headman, leader of communal prayer, a mosque official, and muezzin.*

This sentence is starting from the highest status to lowest one. It is what we called as anticlimax. In this sentence the highest status is **gecik** and the lowest status is **muezzin**. This figure is the opposite of climax.

**Omission or suppression**

**a. Ellipsis**

Ellipsis is an omission of a word or words in a sentence. Generally, the reader can fill the omitted words.

*(Cuben ule pak gecik penan seruel ni ... !)*

Meaning : *sir, please eat this snack ... !*

This sentence is called ellipsis. The complete sentence is *Cuben ule pak i paan penan seruel ni ... !* In this sentence the word *paan* is omitted because without that word, someone has already understood the goal of that sentence.

**b. Erotesis**

Erotesis is also called Rhetorical Question, Interrogating, the asking of questions without expecting an answer. This functions to express affirmation, demonstration, wonder, exultation, wishes, denials, doubts, admonitions, expostulations, prohibitions, pity, disparagements, reproaches, lamentation, indignation, absurdities and one must decide which of these is the point.

*(ike lagu ini male jadi hana kam?)*

Meaning : *... if like this, what do you want to be?*

This sentence is usually used when parents are angry with their children because of the misbehavior. Of course this question cannot be answered by their child.

**c. Meiosis/Litotes**

Meiosis is a belittling of one thing to magnify another, it is also called litotes.

*Maan ule bang ... ! Cical-cical we ara ni ... !*

Meaning : *please eat ... ! Only sambal we have.*

In this utterance the host says *Cical* to the guest but the real thing is there are so many delicious foods provided there.

## **Conclusions**

*Melengkan* is a speech tradition usually performed at important events or social gatherings and the performance of which is through figures of speech; in other words it is clearly seen that *melengkan* is actually a manifestation of figurative language. Wedding is an important part in everyone's life and the performance of a wedding should be taken care from various angle so as to produce harmony among the members of the community involved. By *melengkan*, slip of the tongue, or miscommunication owing to the wrong use of words could be avoided, and thus *melengkan* is placed at a significant post at a wedding.

The types of figures of speech: Comparison consisting of simile, metaphor, allegory, and personification; Substitution of metonymy, synecdoche, merism, euphemism, and irony; Addition or Amplification of parallelism, repetition, hyperbole, climax, and anticlimax; and Omission or Suppression of ellipsis, erotesis, and meiosis are commonly used in *Melengkan* of Gayo Wedding. *Melengkan* has become the icon of Gayo cultural values as language also shows cultural identity and from the use of language or figures of speech in *Melengkan*, people could identify all the points of local wisdom commonly applied in the daily life of Gayo people.

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